TL6849

Kupang, 7th May 1993

Dear Carmel,

I have just returned from X's trial in Dili - the second last session before the verdict and having made some interesting observations, you came to mind instantly to share (help me) and interpret those. In the last 2 months I have been twice to E. Tle first time at the end of March during the Idul Fitri break by private car - without Surat Jalan - across the border at Batugede between West - and East Timor. For various reasons I had to cross this 'border' 6 times and came to the conclusion that such a thing as a border didn't exist and is just a figment of the imagination of anxious minds and bored (and powerless) policemen in Atambua. I concede that it was Idul Fitri / Hari Raya, when every good (Javanese) Moslem goes Kampung, but none of the Pos Kamlings between Atambua, Belibo, Maliana and Dili was occupied, and if Fretelin ever plans to stage a coup, they should consider Idul-Fitri. We spent 10 days in Oecussi and Fretelinland visiting areas and people at our least's content, without ever being questioned, stopped or hassled. I include some photos; tasteless, pathetic and obscene they are in their attempt to create political realities, like the mi

guided Streetnames in Pante Makassar (Accussi), Jalan Apodeti, Jalan Hi Murtopo, Jalan Integrasi and Pembangunan with its potholes and one decayed dangling, broken lamp-post: these photos certainly prove them wrong. * sorry, I forgot to take them with me to Germany, will follow soon, when back in Kupang.

Actually, I didn't want to talk much of the first trip in this letter, although it was a marvellous experience camping all along the way through the 2 Timors.

So, let me turn to Wednesday 5th May, the day everyone thought was going to be the last day of the trial & and therefore the pronouncement of the verdict. This time I flew into Dili, meeting up with a Swiss American girl also interested in Human Rights and who had visited me the previous week in Kupang, sent via the Darwin connection. (and an American geophysicist normally working in Pecanbaru) Maybe I thought there was safety in numbers, because it certainly takes a lot of nerve to attend this tribunal being the only foreigners and being entirely surrounded by INTEL; the lion's den.... etc. In the afternoon we visited the Santa Cruz cemetery armed with video cameras etc. Like during the Jakul Fitri visit we were instantly shadowed by young INTEL guys with walkie-talkies. This time, however, I counted 7, who like leeches stuck to every step of ours. There was a candle procession (of about 100 black-clad people)

going on, i. e. people went from grave to grave (specific ones) praying, singing, mumbling the rosary, lighting candles (4th May afternoon), kneeling down etc. etc., but we couldn't find out what for, why, because the fellows with the walkie-talkies instantly warned us not to take photos nor to talk to anyone; they are mere youngsters, Javanese mainly, half your age, who pursue you relentlessly, talk to you impudently, follow you like a shadow at a meter's distance, and if you turn to the left, you are instantly met, greeted and shadowed by another one, crew-cut and dumb-looking... and constr by asking questions. I don't know of any other place in the world, where you get boosted at a cemetery or are forbidden to talk to praying people there. Maybe you do... Doesn't that tell you enough about a government that places Intel at a cemetery to discourage foreigners to find out ... God knows what?

I would have liked to find out what these processions were in aid of, because all over town there were (young) people wearing small black bits of cloth pinned to their sleeves. Like in Germany, years ago, when people who were mourning the death of a relative would wear (black) a 'bandage', an armband around the upper arm, rather an old-fashioned custom (perhaps

but couldn't get a clear answer (or perhaps my Indonesian failed me). My interpretation was that the day before X's trial people wore this as a sign of silent protest or mourning. Or else, look into a Christian (Portuguese/Catholic) calender and tell me what the 4th May 93 signified. (Pentecostal?)
I was lone a video camera and did quite a bit of filming for example the 'protesting' Intel guys outside the cemetery involved in heavy 'debates' with my two companions; just to see their unpleasant faces makes you shudder; I managed to film for 3 minutes inside the court with X's back towards us (this was all that was allowed; although I kept the camera running during the trial to tape at least what was said), I filmed extensively (and was promptly & extensively filmed by INTEL) the crowd (a sea of Javanese faces and khaki uniforms!) sitting inside the court waiting for the trial to open and X being brought out of his cell & back again, and the whole crazy security operations outside the court yard, when he was driven away again. X is right, with the exception of his parents and 1 Timorese priest (Father Antonio from the DIAS an old Apodeti member, son of a Raja and a slight suspect character, in my eyes) there were no Timorese at the court (to listen to his message: the pledoie

but about a hundred what seemed to me Javanese Intelligence. God knows what they were there for!

To get into the court I might have committed a grav mistake. At the first security desk I handed over my Australian Embassy card (I thought will if I could achieve the right impression, and also it carries my married English name rather than my German as in my German passport and it would be more difficult to track me down in "their" computers, later.) Or perhaps - 3 weeks later - with hindsight it wasn't, but a valuable (even though nerve-wrecking!) lesson on Australia's foreign policy (of appeasement, Australia's interest in the region and their fears and their unwavering determination to not let moral questions like human rights come between the 2 governments. You probably know that officially I work as a Long Term Adviser for AIDAB (the Australian Gov. Aid Agency) and thus am expected to represent Australian interest. not to involve myself in political issues (and Timor trial is one in their eyes) (etc. etc.) In return I get 'diplomatic immunity' (whatever that means...), a DIMA visa and a great whacking salary. This is an important factor to comprehend and come to terms wi

enormous inertia, political shoulder-shrugging &/c indifference, opportunism or plain silence of the expat community, the armies of advisors, consultants & experts here at a time of recession and unemployment in their own countries... But I am digressing, I wanted to talk about the trial on the 5th and what happened as a consequence of me attending it.

To get into the court you get body-searched and once inside extensively filmed and then approached and questioned by anybody & everybody: three foreigners caused an enormous stir: who were we? (journalists? bad, bad guys...). I tried to fob them off by repeating 'Australian Embassy'.... but why did I have a video camera? I spotted amongst the 3 dates European faces one I knew only too well, the first political secretary of the German Embassy with whom during my life in Jakarta I had had a number of (partly unfriendly) encounters and who had once rung up the Head of the Goethe Institute enquiring if I was working for the German Intelligence (as I had appeared remarkably well-informed on E.T. during a "briefing session" the German Ambassador had asked me to give after João's (and the 70 demonstrators') arrest in 91.) It's customary during Indon. political

trials, or so it seems, to invite 'observers' from the foreign embassies, partly to give their machinations an appearance of credibility and to be able to say: it was public, democratic and we followed all the legal steps and right procedures, knowing full well that the embassies are in cahoots with them or obliged to diplomatic silence and 'impotence'. To evade the onslaught of questions, attention and constant filming I volunteered to enter into a dialogue with him and hide behind his broad bulky body, engrossed in a foreign tongue. He might have been the one who later reported my presence to the Australian Embassy, which got me into considerable trouble.

his man from the German Embassy, a Mr Tustmann

Eventually the trial began, the judges marched in and we were 'slipped into line' (first standing, then while seated not to cross one's legs or operate the video camera), then the prisoners (no standing up). Salmon didn't recognise him, he seemed to have put on weight and his sideburns were grey — but he moved with dignity and ease and control ... then a loud-speaker announcement was made that photographing was now allowed for 3 minutes. The relationship between him and his interpreter seemed tense & 'anti' ... something; the interpreter turned his back on him

a number of times, especially when X said that he was not an Indonesian. The poor guy looked as if he feared to get himself into trouble for saying anything as subversive as that. As by now you know probably well that he then rejected his own defense counsel Sudjono, which caused a stir and when he was about to start reading out his pleidoie which was in Portuguese the judges asked for time-out to withdraw and deliberate for an hour. I took the opportunity to sidle up to an Indonesian, older (and looking Western-educated) and who looked influential as the team of defense counsels from Jakarta (some very babyfaced looking boys) was running up to him constantly (and whispering things into his ear), I introduced myself as being from the Australian Embassy and wondered if he could tell me what the judges were deliberating. As it turned out this was Prof. Saketapy from Airlangga University (Surabaya) the actual wayang dalang behind Sudjono & Co. He told me what was going on, seemed to be going on, actually going on... this man was difficult to fathom but he came out with some very revealing and frank claims. He said he was very disturbed by X.'s behaviour today - re rejecting Sudjono's power of attorney - this was unusual, since so far the prisoner had shown himself to be very co-operative. Upon my question as to what might have been responsible for this change

of heart, he bent forward and asked me anxiously if I could keep a secret... I had to check myself not to burst out laughing when he urged me not to tell anybody about this... 'Waldo, Amos Wak the UN, Boutros[2] Ghali had put X up to this.... I couldn't imagine what X would gain by rejectin his own defense counsel, but he kept on whispering and insisting, that X was a political animal playing political games and that Waldo had put the ideas into his head, to stall for time perhaps....
One thing that struck me suddenly was the fact that Indonesia did not feel half as cock-sure as they make out to be re their position in E.T. Reading the Jakarta Post one might get the impression, the Indonesians are the eternal winners in this very ill-balanced struggle and really (have been) calling the trumps over the last months (years, de-cades...), but the longer I listened to this man's explo-nations (the more) I realised how much they have been bluffing, knowingly. He (they) was afraid that the UN was siding with the East Timorese, playing intrigues against Indonesia, using Xanana behind their backs as to low to believe in court, 'masterminding' the big sleadowplay all the way from New York or Geneva (I thought to myself only a Javanese could think up such melodrama

1 Sept. 93

Dearest Carmel,
the saga could go on and on and on. Lots of things have happened in the meantime. Australian Intelligence (part of AIDAB's information service in Canberra) came to Kupang, particularly to 'warn' me never to involve myself in any 'sensitive' issues re Indon. - Austral. relationships again (such as X trial) or to visit E. T. again (this was on a second, more recent visit by Embassy people from Jakarta, or I'd lose my job; Australian film maker David Bradbury came & went (. fled), and after long involved story, we accompanied him into E. T. coming in over a very rough track across the mountains from the South, etc. etc.; more repercussions - unpleasant...
I am on a short visit to see my mother (who is losing her memory) here in Germany and will be leaving for Kupang (via Jakarta) on 12 Sept. We'll be going on a short holiday until Thursday 9th Sept., to the East where we are from. I hope to be able to give you a ring on either 10 or 11 Sept., wanting to hear what's going on internationally, because being in Kupang, you are very cut off in some ways. Sorry to be in such a rush, sorry that I forgot to include the telling photos (but I did bring the video cassette with the 3 mins of X's trial). Hope to talk to you soon, Much love, Victoria